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ABSTRACT

An alternative to job applications--and one that can turn an individual's deficits or disabilities into assets--is a personal resume. The adult basic education teacher can assist the student in developing a personal resume and suggest the most effective methods for using it. The informal resume used at the Rappahannock Rehabilitation Facility, Fredericksburg, Virginia, follows this format: name, address, personal data (birthdate, marital status, number of children), telephone number, social security number, health, occupational goal, skills, education, experience, and references. A personal resume is more flexible than a job application. The individual can choose how best to present job interests and skills; the presentation can be tailored to meet the needs of a specific company; and a description of an individual's interests and abilities may stimulate an employer to create a position to fill a previously unmet need. A significant advantage of a personal resume lies in its potential to explain a disability or deficit in positive terms. (YLB)

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TECHNíQUES

The ABE Student Resume: An Alternative to Job Applications

by Nancy Van Valkenburgh, an educational specialist at Rappahannock Rehabilitation Facility in Fredericksburg, Virginia

Adult basic education teachers must frequently devise creative solutions when trying to meet the diverse needs of their students. When compared to actual abilities and academic accomplishments, the goals and interests expressed by the adult student sometimes appear to be unrealistic. With some ingenuity on the part of the ABE teacher, however, the student's abilities and the expressed goals may not be as far apart as they first appear. One example of a possible discrepancy between a student's abilities and a desired goal occurs when a poor reader expresses a desire to learn how to fill out job applications. Considering the variety of available application forms, the extensive vocabulary, and the numerous ways of expressing the same question, (such as *previous* address, *former* addresss, or *last* address) the task of learning how to fill out job application forms can be enormous.

An alternative to job applications – and one which can often turn an individual's deficits or disabilities into assets – is a personal resume. Instead of spending a lot of time teaching the student to recognize and respond to a series of vocabulary words on a variety of forms, the ABE teacher can assist the student in developing a personal resume and suggest the most effective methods for using the resume.

The following is the format for an informal resume used at the Rappahannock Rehabilitation Facility in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Naturally, the names have been changed.

Personal Resume

NAME:	Leslie Grew	PERSONAL DATA Birthdate: 2-12-54 Married, 2 children
ADDRESS:	416 Washington St. Fredericksburg, VA 22401	
TELEPHONE:	(703) 371-5391	
S.S.N.:	317-88-9454	
HEALTH:	Good – my right side is partially paralyzed, but it does not interfere with my ability to work.	
OCCUPATIONAL GOAL:	I would like a job working with young children. I am available immediately and will accept full-time or part-time employment leading to permanent full-time work. I can work any hours.	
SKILLS I CAN OFFER:	1) General:	I am dependable and I am used to assuming responsibility.
	2) Specific:	I am artistic and do a lot of arts and crafts. I play the piano and know many children's songs. I volunteered for the rescue squad and have practiced first aid. I love children and have two of my own.
EDUCATION:	1967-1969	Stafford Junior High School
	1980 to present	Adult Basic Education Classes with goal of GED

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EXPERIENCE: 1974-1977 Virginia Power Company, Fredericksburg, VA
Responsibilities: Receptionist

1972-1974 Fredericksburg Flowers, Fredericksburg, VA
Responsibilities: Cashier and general duties including assisting with flower arranging.

REFERENCES: Mr. Samuel Johns
Fredericksburg Flowers
2018 Williams Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Ms. Joan Fuller
917 Cream Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Ms. Viola Lee
Virginia Power Company
908 Mart Avenue
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Many employers will accept a resume in lieu of a job application. Indeed, many organizations and businesses which do not have any openings will often accept a personal resume but will refuse to provide application forms to prospective applicants. When the organization or business does have an opening, a brief letter or telephone call inquiring about the position and mentioning a resume already on file may give the applicant a time advantage over other individuals who must make appointments to fill out applications before arranging for their interviews. In cases where the employer insists on a company form, the applicant can use the information from the resume in completing the application.

A personal resume is more flexible than a job application. In a resume, the individual can choose how best to present his or her job interests and skills. The presentation of job skills and interests can then be tailored to meet the needs of a specific company. Also, a description of an individual's interests and abilities may stimulate an employer to create a position to fill a need previously unmet. If appropriate, the presentation can indicate that an individual is flexible and will consider a variety of (or any) jobs available. A significant advantage of a personal resume over a job appliction, particularly for a poor reader or an individual with a handicap, lies in its potential to explain a disability or deficit in positive terms. For example, a poor reader may acknowledge that reading is a problem, but emphasize that it will not interfere with work performance. Statements such as the following do much to reassure an employer that the individual will work hard to overcome any potential difficulties on the job:

"I do not read well, but I am willing to study at home to learn all the words I need to know to do the job."

"I am a slow learner, but once I learn something, I remember it very well."

"I have a false leg, but I can move without difficulty."

"I have difficulty talking, but I am a hard worker."

A personal resume can take many forms. It can be very formal or rather informal. Some applicants may want to write a "professional" sounding resume and will need to seek help with the final wording. Other applicants will choose to write resumes in their own words. Whatever their approach, a resume can be a positive alternative to a job application for ABE students.

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